

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A portable electronic organizer for independent operation and for operation with a portable telephone, the organizer comprising:

5 a portable docking unit configured to removably mate to the telephone; and
a portable main unit configured to removably dock to the docking unit,

wherein, when the main unit is docked to the docking unit and the docking unit is mated to the telephone, the main unit is coupled to the telephone, the main unit comprising:

a memory configured to store user data; and

10 a processor coupled to the memory; and

logic configured for the electronic organizer to initiate a voice telephone call over the telephone in response to user input related to the user data.

2. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein the 15 user input related to the user data comprises a command to dial that is invoked by a user in the course of selective viewing by the user of the user data stored in the memory.

3. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein the 20 main unit is configured to be removable during the telephone call for handheld use by the user during a remainder of the telephone call, wherein the telephone call was initiated by the main unit in response to user input.

4. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 3 wherein the 25 main unit is configured to be operable by a hand holding the main unit to thereby leave another hand free to hold the telephone at ear-side during the remainder of the telephone call.

5. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein:
the telephone includes a communication port through which the main unit
communicates with the telephone;

the telephone is configured to terminate a telephone call that involves the communication port in response to detecting that the communication port is no longer being actively used; and

5 the docking unit includes a module configured to prevent the telephone from detecting that the communication port is no longer being actively used, at least after the main unit is removed from the docking unit during a call that involves the main unit and the communication port.

10 6. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 5 wherein the module of the docking unit includes a circuit configured to send signals to the communication port, at least after the main unit is removed from the docking unit during a call that was initiated by the main unit, to prevent the telephone from automatically terminating the call that was initiated by the main unit.

15 7. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 6 wherein:
 the telephone is configured to monitor communications via the communication port to detect a reduction of the communications; and
 the circuit is configured to occasionally send the signals to the communication port to maintain the communications, at least after the main unit is removed from the docking 20 unit during a call that involves the main unit and the communication port.

25 8. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 6 wherein:
 the telephone is configured to occasionally send, via the communication port, requests for acknowledgment for detecting whether the communication port is no longer being actively used; and

 the circuit is configured to respond to the requests by sending the signals to the communication port as acknowledgment, at least after the main unit is removed from the docking unit during a call that involves the main unit and the communication port.

9. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein:
the telephone is hereinafter referred to as the first telephone;
the docking unit is hereinafter referred to as the first docking unit;
the main unit is also configured to removably dock with a second docking unit
that is designed for removably mating to a second telephone;
the second telephone is of a different model as compared to the first
telephone; and
the first and second docking units each includes model-specific features for
interfacing with the first and second telephones, respectively.

10 10. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 9 wherein:
the model-specific features include a physical protrusion; and
the main unit is contoured to be independent of the physical protrusion, for
ease of carrying and use.

15 11. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein:
the docking unit includes model-specific features primarily dictated by the
geometry for removably mating with the telephone; and
the main unit is configured for ease of carrying and use independently of the
geometry for removably mating with the telephone.

20 12. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein the
docking unit is configured to removably mate to the telephone at an attachment point
associated with attachment of a battery for the telephone.

25 13. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 12 wherein the
attachment point is suitable for attachment of an external auxiliary battery for the telephone.

14. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 13 wherein the telephone is a StarTAC® cellular telephone.

5 15. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 12 wherein:
the attachment point is suitable for attachment of a cover for an internal
battery compartment; and
the docking unit is configured to include connectors for attaching to the
attachment point.

10 16. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 12 wherein the
docking unit includes a power supply configured to supply power to the telephone.

15 17. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein the
docking unit includes at least one physical connector for mating the docking unit to the
telephone, and the docking unit includes a docking port for accepting the main unit, wherein
the at least one physical connector and the docking port are configured such that, when the
main unit is docked to the docking unit and the docking unit is mated to the telephone, the
organizer and the telephone together can be physically handled as a substantially rigid
integrated combination.

20 18. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein at least
a portion of the main unit is configured to have the form factor of at least a portion of an
interface card, for connectivity with another device.

25 19. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein:
the telephone includes a communication port; and
the organizer further comprises a pass-through communication port by which
another device may be coupled to the telephone when the organizer is occupying the
communication port of the telephone.

20. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein:
the telephone can be worn on a holster; and
the organizer is configured to avoid interfering with the holster, whereby when
the docking unit is mated to the telephone, the telephone can still be worn on the holster.

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21. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 1 wherein the
electronic organizer includes a first power supply configured to supply power to the processor
for operating the main unit independently of any power supply in the telephone.

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22. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 28 wherein the
electronic organizer includes a second power supply configured to supply power to the
telephone.

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23. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 29 wherein:
the first and second power supplies are not a same power supply;
the main unit includes the first power supply; and
the docking unit includes the second power supply.

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24. A portable electronic organizer for independent operation and for
operation with a portable telephone, the organizer comprising:
a memory for storing user data;
a display coupled to the memory;
a communication coupler configured to interface with the portable telephone;
and

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a processor, coupled to the memory and the display, configured to control, in
response to user input, selective conveying of the user data to the user and instructing of the
telephone via the communication coupler to initiate a phone call;

wherein the electronic organizer is capable of handheld use by a user for selectively accessing the user data while physically separate from the telephone, even during the phone call initiated by the telephone in response to the instructing by the processor.

5 25. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein the organizer is configured to be operable by a hand holding the organizer to thereby leave another hand free to hold the telephone at ear-side during the phone call.

10 26. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein:
the phone call is hereinafter referred as the organizer-initiated phone call;
the telephone is configured to terminate a phone call involving an external device in response to concluding that the external device is no longer using the phone call;
and

15 the electronic organizer includes a module configured to prevent the telephone from concluding that the electronic organizer is no longer using the organizer-initiated phone call when the electronic organizer is in handheld use by a user for selectively accessing the user data during the organizer-initiated phone call.

20 27. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 26 wherein the module is configured to send signals via the communication coupler, at least when the electronic organizer is in handheld use by a user for selectively accessing the user data during the organizer-initiated phone call, to prevent the telephone from terminating the organizer-initiated phone call.

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28. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein the portable telephone is a wireless cellular telephone.

29. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein the organizer is configured to store user data in the memory including contact and schedule data.

5 30. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein the organizer includes a browser for accessing remote information via the telephone.

10 31. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein the organizer includes a serial port for connecting with another device for synchronizing user data stored in the memory with corresponding user data in the other device.

15 32. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein the organizer is configured to handle electronic mail communications communicated via the telephone.

20 33. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 wherein:
the electronic organizer is configured to store user data including a list of contacts;

the organizer includes software configured to instruct the processor to:
accept caller-identification information associated with an incoming phone call;

identify, in the list of contacts, a contact corresponding to the caller-identification information; and

convey the identified corresponding contact to the user for the user to use in determining whether to accept the incoming phone call.

25 34. The portable electronic organizer according to claim 24 further comprising a microphone and speech recognition software for accepting voice commands for operating the organizer.

35. A method for cooperatively using a portable phone and a portable electronic organizer that has a display, the method comprising:

electively placing the portable electronic organizer into proximity with the portable phone to enable communication;

5 displaying at the display first information comprising entries having corresponding phone number information;

receiving first input that indicates a user request to dial a phone number associated with a particular entry of the displayed entries;

10 transmitting a first command from the electronic organizer to the phone for attempting to establish communication between the electronic organizer and the phone;

if a communication can be established between the electronic organizer and the phone, transmitting in response to the user request a second command, from the electronic organizer to the phone, that instructs the phone to dial the phone number to thereby establish a phone call;

15 during the established phone call, receiving second input indicating a user request to use the electronic organizer to view second information; and

in response to the second input, while at least a portion of the electronic organizer that includes the display is physically uncoupled from the phone, displaying at the electronic organizer the second information for viewing by the user while the user is actively engaged in the established phone call.

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36. The method of claim 35 wherein the step of placing the electronic organizer into proximity with the phone comprises physically attaching the electronic organizer to the phone.

37. The method of claim 36 further comprising physically uncoupling the at least a portion of the electronic organizer from the phone prior to the step of receiving the second input.

38. The method of claim 36 wherein the step of placing the electronic organizer into proximity with the phone further comprises making electrical contact between signal conductors, and the step of transmitting the second command comprises transmitting the second command across the signal conductors.

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39. The method of claim 36, wherein the phone is a cellular phone that accommodates a battery, and the step of physically attaching the electronic organizer to the phone comprises attaching the electronic organizer to the phone at a location intended for attaching the battery.

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40. The method of claim 36, wherein the phone is a cellular phone that includes a battery compartment and a battery-compartment cover, and the step of physically attaching the electronic organizer to the phone comprises attaching the electronic organizer to the phone at a location intended for attaching the battery-compartment cover.

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41. The method of claim 35 wherein the step of placing the electronic organizer into proximity with the phone comprises positioning the electronic organizer within about one meter of the phone, and the step of transmitting the second command comprises transmitting the second command wirelessly.

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42. The method of claim 41 wherein the step of transmitting the second command wirelessly comprises transmitting the second command using infrared signals.

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43. The method of claim 41 wherein the step of transmitting the second command wirelessly comprises transmitting the second command using radio-frequency signals.

44. The method of claim 35 wherein:
the electronic organizer includes a button;

the method further comprises activating of the button by a first hand of the user while a second hand of the user is holding the phone at ear-side; and

the step of receiving the second input includes detecting the activating of the button.

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45. The method of claim 35 wherein:

the electronic organizer includes a first module and a second module that are physically separable from one another; and

the step of placing the electronic organizer into proximity with the phone comprises electively and physically attaching the first module to the phone.

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46. The method of claim 45 wherein the step of placing the electronic organizer into proximity with the phone further comprises electively and physically attaching the second module to the first module.

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47. The method of claim 46 wherein the step of placing the electronic organizer into proximity with the phone further comprises making electrical contact between signal conductors, and the step of transmitting the second command comprises transmitting the second command across the signal conductors toward the phone.

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48. The method of claim 47, wherein the phone is a cellular phone that accommodates a battery, and the step of physically attaching the first module to the phone comprises attaching the first module to the phone at a location configured for attaching the battery.

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49. The method of claim 45, wherein the phone includes a battery-compartment cover, and the step of physically attaching the first module to the phone comprises attaching the first module to the phone at a location configured for attaching the battery-compartment cover.

50. The method of claim 35 wherein:

the phone uses a first command protocol;

the second module uses a second command protocol; and

the method further comprises translating between the first and the second

5 protocols by the first module to facilitate communication between the second module and the phone.

51. The method of claim 35 wherein the step of receiving the first input comprises:

10 receiving third input for highlighting the particular entry of the entries of the first information; and

thereafter, receiving fourth input for indicating that the user desires to call the phone number associated with the particular entry; and

wherein the first input includes the third input and the fourth input.

15 52. The method of claim 35 wherein the electronic organizer includes contact information and event information; and

the second information includes information from at least one member of the set consisting of the contact information and the event information.